



SACRED HEART COLLEGE

Special Educational Needs Policy

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1 Rationale

At Sacred Heart College, provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs is guided by our core values of Compassion, Faith, Hope and Joy. We recognise the inherent dignity and unique potential of every young person and are committed to ensuring that all pupils feel respected, supported and included within our school community.

Compassion informs our response to individual needs, while Faith underpins our belief in the worth of each pupil. Hope shapes our determination to remove barriers to learning and promote progress, and Joy reflects our aim to foster confidence, belonging and achievement.

Through inclusive practice, collaborative partnerships and high-quality support, we seek to enable every pupil to participate fully and to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

2 Legislative & Strategic Context

This policy is informed by and fully compliant with the following Northern Ireland legislation and guidance:

- Education (NI) Order 1996
- Special Educational Needs & Disability (NI) Order 2005 (SEND0)
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Act (NI) 2016
- Children & Young People's Strategy (2017–2027)
- EA Graduated Response Framework (2023) – three-stage model
- DE Guidance Supporting Children with SEN (2020)
- EA Circular Guidance on the Use of Restraint & Seclusion in Educational Settings 2021/13
- JCQ Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities & Learning Difficulties (latest edition)

3 Definitions

Special Educational Needs (SEN): A pupil has SEN if they have a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision (SpEP) to be made.

Learning Difficulty includes:

1. Significantly greater difficulty in learning than peers.
2. A disability which prevents/hinders use of normal educational facilities.

Special Educational Provision (SpEP): Educational provision additional to or otherwise different from that made generally for children of the same age.

Disability: "A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on day-to-day activities" (Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

4 Key Principles of Inclusion

Sacred Heart College recognises the right of all pupils to the “same opportunities in the whole of their educational life”. We therefore commit to:

- Early identification and intervention.
- Pupil voice and active participation.
- Partnership with parents/guardians.
- Collaboration with external agencies.
- High-quality, appropriately differentiated teaching for all.
- Effective use of reasonable adjustments, assistive technology and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies based on the following three core principles of UDL:

1. Multiple Means of Engagement

The “why” of learning – stimulating interest and motivation for learning.

- Provide choices and autonomy in tasks.
- Vary levels of challenge to match student needs.
- Create a supportive and respectful learning environment.
- Use relevance and real-world contexts.

2. Multiple Means of Representation

The “what” of learning – presenting information in different ways.

- Use visual, auditory, and tactile supports.
- Break information into manageable chunks.
- Use symbols, charts, videos, and simplified texts.
- Support vocabulary and language development.

3. Multiple Means of Action and Expression

The “how” of learning – allowing students to express what they know in various ways.

- Offer alternatives to written responses (oral, visual, practical).
- Use technology tools like speech-to-text.
- Scaffold complex tasks.
- Encourage use of graphic organisers and mind maps.

5 Aims

At Sacred Heart College we aim to:

1. Identify pupils with SEN/disabilities as early and accurately as possible.
2. Provide access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum—including the NI Curriculum—in the least restrictive environment.
3. Promote progress, achievement and positive self-image.
4. Engage parents as partners and fully integrate pupil voice into our evaluations.
5. Work collaboratively with EA, HSC Trusts and other statutory agencies.
6. Ensure efficient, effective use of resources, including Classroom Assistants.
7. Provide systematic assessment, planning, recording, action and review (IEP).
8. Offer staff regular, high-quality CPD in SEN and inclusion.
9. Support successful transitions between key stages and beyond school.
10. Promote further involvement of pupils with SEN in extra-curricular activities

6 SEN Categories (DENI 2019)

1. Cognition & Learning (CL)
2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional & Well-being (SBEW)
3. Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)
4. Sensory (SE)
5. Physical and Medical (PM)

7 Roles & Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
Board of Governors	Approve & annually review SEN policy; ensure resources & strategic oversight; monitor GRF/IPAMER implementation.
Principal	Overall responsibility for implementation; supports SENCo in IPAMER reviews and RFI submissions; ensures staffing and CPD.
SENCo / Learning Support Coordinator	Lead the Graduated Response & IPAMER cycle; maintain SEN Register & IEPs, manage RFI portal; coordinate external agencies; analyse impact data; lead staff CPD.
KS4 Learning Support Coordinator	Coordination of KS4 learning support provision & transitions; supports IPAMER reviews. Access Arrangements
Heads of Key Stages and Heads of Year	Review students' academic attainment and evaluate students' pastoral needs at Pupils of Concern meetings with the VP and SENCo
Subject & Form Teachers / Heads of Departments	Deliver high-quality adaptive teaching; implement reasonable adjustments; contribute to IPAMER cycle.
Classroom Assistants	Deliver targeted interventions; provide feedback for IPAMER monitoring and support with the administration of 'Pupil View' and 'Parent View' in IEPs
Parents/Guardians	Share insights; contribute 'Parent View' in IEPs; engage in reviews; consent to RFI where required.
Pupils	Articulate views; contribute 'Pupil View' in IEPs, and participation in decision-making across transitions between KS3/KS4/KS5

8 Graduated Response Framework & IPAMER Cycle

Sacred Heart College follows the EA Graduated Response Framework (GRF), embedding the

Identify → Plan → Action → Monitor → Evaluate → Review (IPAMER) cycle recommended in the 2025 Graduated Response Framework (GRF) commencement guidance.

8.1 Continuum of Support

Level	Key Features	Documentation	Typical Timescale
Whole-School Provision	High-quality adaptive teaching, reasonable adjustments, differentiation. Initial additional monitoring is required.	Pupil of Concern meeting records	Ongoing throughout the year
Stage 1	School-delivered special educational provision. IEP required. Majority of needs met here.	IEP (Phase 1–2)	Reviewed twice a year
Stage 2	School provision plus external EA/HSC interventions via the digital Request for Involvement (RFI) portal. Evidence of two reviewed IEP cycles required for RFI.	IEP (Phase 3–4) + RFI	Reviewed twice a year
Stage 3	Statutory Statement of SEN. Provision and placement directed by EA; annual review integrates IEP data.	IEP (aligned to Statement)	Ongoing monitoring + Annual Review

8.2 The IPAMER Cycle

Identify → Plan → Action → Monitor → Evaluate → Review

8.3 Reasonable Adjustments & Adaptive Teaching

The SENDO duty to make reasonable adjustments applies across curriculum, assessment, trips and policies.

8.4 Digital Request for Involvement (RFI)

At Stage 2 the SENCo submits an RFI via the EA Local SEND IMPACT Teams portal.

9 Identification & Assessment

Early identification evidence is gathered from: transition records, observations, standardised screening, diagnostic tools, professional reports, and pupil voice.

10 IEP/Individual Education Plan (IEPs)

IEPs are drawn up at Stage 1, refined through Stages 2–3, co-produced with pupil and parent, and stored securely on SIMS.

The SEN Register is reviewed formally at least twice per year by the SENCo in consultation with Heads of Year, subject teachers and parents.

A pupil may be removed from the SEN Register when:

- targeted special educational provision is no longer required,
- the pupil can access the curriculum effectively through quality-first teaching and reasonable classroom adjustments, and
- progress data, classroom evidence and pupil/parent views indicate sustained improvement.

Parents are consulted before any decision is made to remove a pupil from the register, and monitoring continues to ensure progress is maintained.

11 Provision

Provision ranges from universal quality-first teaching to specialist multi-agency support. Examples: differentiation, support for students with medical needs, learning support interventions for literacy and numeracy, assistive technology, and exam access arrangements.

Deployment of Classroom Assistants

Classroom Assistants are deployed to support learning needs rather than being attached to individual pupils. Deployment is flexible and reviewed regularly to:

- promote pupil independence,
- avoid over-reliance on adult support,
- respond to changing needs across classes and year groups.

Classroom Assistants work under teacher direction and contribute to the IPAMER review process.

The College will endeavour, wherever possible, to provide classroom assistant (CA) support in line with pupils' identified needs and Individual Education Plans.

Classroom assistant support is allocated to the school in the form of hours to assist pupils with identified needs. Responsibility for the appropriate deployment of these resources rests with the Principal.

On occasions where it is not possible to provide a classroom assistant in every instance where one would normally be assigned, senior management will determine the deployment of available support staff, taking account of pupil welfare, identified needs and the effective operation of the school.

In exceptional circumstances, alternative arrangements may be required, which may include a decision that a pupil does not attend school for part or all of the day until appropriate support can be provided.

All such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis and communicated to parents/guardians where appropriate.

12 Transition Planning

KS2–KS3 liaison, KS3–KS4 options guidance, and KS4–KS5/FE transitions. Pupil voice is central to all transition planning, ensuring pupils with SEN are supported to make informed decisions about subject choices, career pathways, and post-16/post-18 destinations. Pupils are actively involved in setting personal goals and reviewing support needs as they move through key stages.

13 Staff Development

Annual SEN CPD opportunities and induction for new staff. The Learning Support Handbook for Classroom Assistants is reviewed annually.

14 Partnership with External Agencies

EA SEN services, EA Careers services, EA Transitions services, Educational Psychology, CAMHS, AAIS, EWO, Teacher of the Deaf, PPBS, Literacy Service, ETA, Gateway, Cedar Foundation, and the NOW Group.

Safeguarding and SEN

Pupils with SEN may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks. This policy operates in conjunction with the College Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff remain alert to signs of distress, communication difficulties or behavioural changes which may indicate additional needs or safeguarding concerns.

15 Complaints

Raise concerns with SENCo; formal complaints follow policy; parents of Statemented pupils may also contact EA, DARS, or SENDIST.

Parents have the right to:

- request statutory assessment through the Education Authority,
 - appeal EA decisions regarding assessment or provision,
 - access the Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS),
 - seek mediation, and
 - appeal to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).
- The College will work collaboratively with families to resolve concerns at the earliest stage.

16 Monitoring & Evaluation

SENCo, SLT and Governors monitor IEP impact, progress data, staff feedback, resource deployment.

Impact of SEN provision is evaluated through:

- progress data,
 - IEP Expected Outcome achievement,
 - Annual Reviews of students with Statements
 - attendance and engagement indicators,
 - pupil and parent feedback, and
 - evaluation of intervention effectiveness.
- Where progress is limited, provision is reviewed and adapted through the IPAMER process.

17 Policy Review

Reviewed annually or sooner if legislation changes; approved by Governors.

Appendix I SEN Legal Compliance Statement

Sacred Heart College confirms that this SEN Policy aligns with statutory duties set out by the Department of Education Northern Ireland and the Education Authority.

The College ensures:

- Early identification of SEN
- Graduated Response and IPAMER implementation
- Parental and pupil participation
- Maintenance and review of the SEN Register
- Provision of Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- Reasonable adjustments under disability legislation
- Secure management of SEN records
- Appropriate use of Classroom Assistants
- Collaboration with external agencies
- Clear pathways for parental disagreement resolution
- Monitoring of impact of SEN provision

